

ANNUAL REPORT

TO THE

PENRITH URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

FOR THE

Year ended December 31st, 1905,

BY

FRANCIS HASWELL, M.D.

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH.

PENRITH ;

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Medical Officer of Health for the Year 1905.



GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS.

The Urban District of Penrith is situated chiefly in a small valley which connects the larger valleys of the Eamont and Petteril, and through which a stream, partly artificial, runs connecting the two rivers. The area is 7856 acres, a considerable portion of which is agricultural land. The whole district is situated on the Permian sandstone, which is very porous, and absorbs moisture readily, but beds of boulder clay in places render these situations somewhat damp. The ground is much broken up by hi'll and dale, Penrith Beacon on the East side being 937 feet above sea level, and the lowest point being about 400 feet, at the River Eamont. The town of Penrith is towards the South side of the irregular parallelogram of the district, and is situated in the valley and on the slopes of the Penrith Beacon, between the heights of 450 and 700 feet. There are also in the District two hamlets—Carleton village and part of Eamont Bridge, besides the usual scattered farm houses and cottages. The town is almost entirely residential, and owes its position chiefly to the fact of its being a market centre; there are, however, a few industries, such as tannery, two breweries, and a railway junction, which occupy the energies of a part of the population.

As in most small country towns the population is stationary, which in itself is a matter for some small amount of congratulation, when many country towns of our size are slowly decreasing, but, I think the probability is that Penrith will slowly increase as its popularity as a healthful place of residence becomes more known, and from this point of view, any expenditure tending to make it more attractive and sanitary is money well spent.

The population at the Census of 1901 was 9182, an increase on that of 1891 of 200 only: the chief reason for this is that many young persons leave the town to seek employment elsewhere. This is also a reason for the death-rate of such towns being greater than one would naturally expect, especially as a considerable number of persons come to reside in their declining years.

VITAL STATISTICS.

Births.

There have been 229 births registered during the year—this is lower than the average of the last ten years by 12; and the birth-rate calculated on an estimated population of 9292 is 23·13; of these births 109 were males and 120 females.

The birth-rates for the last ten years can be seen in the tables at the end of this report.

Of these births 12 males and 6 females were illegitimate, giving an illegitimate birth-rate of ·43 per 1000 population and 78·60 per 1000 births. This is not high, and is even then partly accounted for by the fact that such persons seek the town from Rural Districts for greater comfort and semi-obscurity.

GENERAL MORTALITY.

Death Rate.

The total number of deaths during the year has been 145, but three deaths of non-residents in public institutions have to be deducted, giving a total of 142, which on the estimated population gives a death-rate of 15·44: this is quite satisfactory considering the character of the population of the town and is the lowest recorded since 1892.

Classification of Deaths according to Age.

(a) Under One Year.

This is the first year that the Local Government Board have issued a special table to be filled for Infantile deaths. I have in previous years always made out a table showing these deaths, which are very important; so many of these are avoidable and due to improper care or feeding of infants.

We have had 26 deaths of children under one year, which means that of every 1000 born 113 do not see their first anniversary.

Five of these deaths are from premature birth and one from Hepatic Dropsy—the deaths of such children are no doubt wholly unavoidable. Three are due to whooping cough, which is very fatal in infants: Five to tuberculous disease: one to mal-nutrition: two to convulsions: four to diseases of the lungs: one to mediastinal abscess: three to gastro-enteritis: and one to burns. All these are more or less avoidable, but the degree depends upon the particular circumstances of each case.

(b) One Year and Under Five Years.

Under this head there are 11 deaths, of which eight are due to complications of Measles and Whooping cough.

(c) Five Years and Under Fifteen Years.

Eight deaths : one from Whooping cough. The remainder call for no special comment.

(d) Fifteen to Twenty-five Years.

Five deaths : one from Phthisis, and one from Acute Rheumatism.

(e) Twenty-five to Sixty-five years.

Fifty-one deaths have been recorded during these four decades.. Of these four are due to Cancer, six to Phthisis, six to Pneumonia, and the large number of five to Cirrhosis of the liver.

(f) Sixty-five Years and Upwards.

Forty-two deaths occur in this period ; Apoplexy, Heart diseases and senile decay account for the larger number. Two deaths are due to Phthisis which is exceptional at this age.

The age of the oldest person at death was 92 years. The death-rate in the various wards has been ; North Ward 15·77, South 13·76, East 12·56, West (without the workhouse) 13·34. There is no epidemic cause to make the rate in the North Ward higher than the others.

Analysis of the Cause of Death From the Zymotic Diseases.

See Zymotic Sickness.

Influenza has been the cause directly of one death only, but is given as a contributory cause in several others.

Constitutional Diseases.

These account for 25 deaths of which Malignant disease and Tubercular diseases account for the greater number ; there are also two deaths from Rheumatism and three from Diabetes mellitus.

CANCER.—There are only four deaths from this cause and one from Sarcoma ; this is considerably fewer than in recent years, but of course the number is liable to considerable fluctuation, and until the cause has been found out little can be done to check it.

PHTHISIS.—There are 10 deaths from this disease, but taking all Tubercular diseases into the group, the number of deaths

amounts to 15. This is certainly lower than in previous years and represents a death-rate of 1·61. It is too early yet to judge the influence of the Sanatorium at Threlkeld on the number of persons suffering from Tubercular diseases, especially as, the accommodation being limited and the fees high, many persons are not treated there. It is unsatisfactory to find five deaths of infants from Tuberculous disease, and in spite of the recent unsettling of public opinion, it seems fairly well established that the digestion of tuberculous milk may be the cause of these diseases.

Local Diseases.

The largest number of deaths always falls under this heading and calls for little comment. Two cases of Sunstroke, or rather one certified as Sunstroke and another as “probably Sunstroke,” are rather unusual in this climate.

Six deaths from Cirrhosis of the liver, which is due to alcoholic excess is not a satisfactory comment on the habits of the people generally.

Deaths from Violence.

Only one death has occurred from these causes—the death of a child from Burns, and there is a satisfactory absence of Suicide.

Deaths from Ill-Defined Causes.

There are no uncertified deaths. In five cases the Coroner was notified but did not think an inquest necessary, and in one case an inquest was held, the cause of death being returned as “natural causes.”

In one case where it was doubtful whether the cause of death should be returned as malignant disease I wrote to the medical man who certified, but he declined giving me any further information, and the Registrar-General also declined to help me, and the Local Government Board, on being applied to, took no notice of my communication. It seems peculiar that a Board which asks for full and accurate statistics should not, when applied to, give what assistance it can.

Zymotic Sickness.

ZYMOTIC DEATH-RATE.—This is calculated on the principal Zymotic diseases only, those which come under the Infectious Diseases Notification Act, and it is nil this year ; but if measles, whooping cough and influenza are included the rate is 1·39. It may be taken as a fact stated generally that measles and whooping cough now cause more deaths than scarlatina or any

other infectious disease, chiefly, of course, because they are so widespread and partly because so little care is taken of them by the working classes.

ZYMOTIC DISEASE.—There have been no cases of smallpox or enteric fever reported during the year, and there has been a satisfactory absence of *scarlatina*, only six cases having been notified. The first was in May and the infection was evidently brought by visitors to the Yeomanry Camp. In August five cases in different houses began within a week, all in children attending Christ Church Sunday School. I examined all the children at the school but found none desquamating; the rooms were disinfected, and what looked like the beginning of a serious epidemic was nipped in the bud. All the cases were removed to the Hospital. In this instance I think some infected person must have been using the rooms. In another case the infection was brought from Whitehaven.

Diphtheria.—Three cases were notified. Two were removed to the Hospital. In two no cause could be found; in the other a bad sanitary defect was noted in the passage beside the house.

In connection with this disease it has been found that breaking ground fouled with sewage is likely to lead to sore throats of a character which greatly predisposes to diphtheria, and as we are shortly to have some main sewers laid along the lines of old ones, some of which are in an unsatisfactory state, I advise the Council to have the sewers well flushed with some cheap disinfectant such as chloride of lime or crude carbolic acid immediately before they are opened, and if necessary, the ground around treated in the same way when it is removed from round the sewer.

Erysipelas.—Seven cases were notified, but none call for comment; indeed I fail to see the necessity for the notification of this disease, as it seldom communicates itself in ordinary life from one person to another.

Measles.—A very severe and wide-spread epidemic of measles was in existence in the early part of the year and one school was closed in March on this account. There are five deaths due to this cause, all from the complications of Broncho-pneumonia. In consequence of this, and the fact that some part of the spread of the disease was due to the elementary schools, a scheme was arranged with the sanction of the Council and the Education Committee for the notification of

any suspicious case at school by the teachers. I know my ideas gave them a considerable amount of trouble but they loyally co-operated with me and I have found that I have had earlier notification of possible infectious cases than would otherwise have been available.

Whooping Cough.—This disease has also been the cause of seven deaths of small children during the later months of the year. There are no statistics available to show how many cases have occurred, but the disease is certainly spread by children returning to school too soon after an attack and before they are properly free from cough.

The Hospitals are both satisfactory and no great demand has been made on their accommodation during the year, but an isolation ward at the Fair Hill would be a great boon for many reasons ; when inadvertently a case of German measles gets into a scarlet fever ward, and one has to separate patients who have both from those who have one or the other and again separate the sexes, it becomes at present quite a puzzle to know where to put them.

Disinfection is performed by a Reck's steam disinfecter at the Hospital, and by an Equifex spray with formalin at the patients' homes.

SANITATION.

A considerable number of inspections for various purposes have been made during the year and nuisances remedied. The town is gradually making progress from a sanitary standpoint, and insanitary and defective dwellings are being dealt with as occasion arises, and are put into good habitable repair.

Two blocks of houses, one in Cannon yard and the other at Eamont Bridge, for which closing orders were obtained, have been put into repair and the closing orders cancelled. The condition of about a dozen houses at the top of Scotland road being unsatisfactory on account of general delapidation was made the subject of a report to the owners ; they have now been put in better repair, but there is still a certain amount of property in the town which requires attention, not so much on account of nuisances as from decay and want of repair. Another building, never intended for a dwelling house was cleared of its inmate after a good deal of correspondence and threats.

The town is inspected at intervals and insanitary con-

ditions are being continually dealt with, the principal of these being set out as follows :—

Defective drains cleansed and repaired	...	17
„ altered and reconstructed	...	5
Dwellings and other premises furnished with complete new drains	...	46
Filthy dwellings and privies cleansed	..	2
Defective W.C.'s repaired	...	4
Accumulations of rubbish removed	...	21
Ashpits emptied and disinfected	...	136

All drains and alterations thereto have been personally examined by the inspector and tested hydraulically before being “passed,” and where, for good reasons this could not be done the smoke test has been used. Where drains have passed beneath houses heavy iron pipes have generally been used with lead caulked joints. The proper ventilation and interception of drains is always attended to. There are still a number of privy ashpits in the town, but they are gradually being converted into w.c.'s.

All new buildings are occupied only after examination by the Inspector.

The tar macadam laid in previous years is giving every satisfaction, and from a sanitary standpoint is particularly advantageous, it being possible to obtain a much higher standard of cleanliness than is possible with ordinary macadam.

Experiments have been carried out during the year with respect to the coating of newly-rolled macadam streets with a mixture of tar and pitch, &c., and with very good results both from a financial and sanitary point of view. The first cost of carrying out the work being very light and the saving in scavenging and scraping alone, being very considerable, to say nothing of the increased life of the road.

WATER SUPPLY.

The water supply of the town remains as before, but the Council have had its condition under consideration on many occasions. The two schemes which occupy the field are :—
(1) The present source from the river Eamont with the addition of filter beds ; (2) A gravitation scheme from Blencathra.

The reason of the prolonged discussion is on account of the great initial cost of a gravitation supply and the wish of the Council to be as sure as may be of the amount of the estimates before finally putting the two schemes into competition. It is probable, however, that many months will not

elapse before a final conclusion is reached as to which is the most reasonable for the town, which has a large expenditure in view from other causes.

SEWERAGE.

A scheme has been finally adopted by which the sewage is to be carried to the Whinfell Holme, just over the border of the county, in Westmorland. The total cost of the scheme including land, &c., is estimated at £35,000. The treatment of the sewage is by land filtration on the intermittent downward system. For this 10 acres of land are to be used at first, and an additional 10 acres is reserved for future extensions. The estimates include the relaying of most of the sewers in the town.

SCAVENGING.

The general scavenging of the town is done by the Urban Council whose carts take away all ashes and refuse once a week to the tip at the Ballast pit.

A certain amount of nuisance is caused by paper flying about at the tip—a good deal is burned, but when there is a westerly wind a portion escapes and flies about the fields and road adjoining. I think this could be remedied by a high wire screen which would intercept it.

LODGING HOUSES, &c.

There is only one common lodging house in the district and during the year this has been kept in good sanitary condition. This lodging house is regularly inspected by an officer of the Council.

SLAUGHTER HOUSES.

The slaughter-houses are all in the hands of the butchers and are privately owned. These are inspected periodically and minor defects in most of them have been remedied during the year. They are, however, fairly well kept.

WORKSHOPS, &c.

In accordance with the Factory and Workshops Act (1901) the workshops in the town are regularly visited and a register is kept. The various conditions of all the workshops with regard to cleanliness, ventilation and sanitation are generally satisfactory. The cubic space is sufficient in all the workshops, and lists have been issued to all concerned showing the number of workers allowed to be employed.

Registers of outworkers have been submitted and compiled. Limewashing or otherwise of all workshops is regularly carried out and the sanitary conditions generally are good

Close attention has been paid to the Bakehouses during the year and those used are now in a satisfactory condition : the new ones provided being a great improvement upon the underground bake-houses which were in existence previous to the operation of the act.

FRANCIS HASWELL, M.D.

The Friarage,
January 27th, 1906.

M.O.H.

Table 1. For Whole District.

YEAR.	Population estimated to Middle of each year	BIRTHS.		TOTAL DEATHS REGISTERED IN THE DISTRICT.				Total Deaths in Public Institutions in the District	Deaths of Non-residents registered in Public Institutions in the District	Net Deaths at all Ages belonging to the District.	Number	Rate
		Number	Rate	Under 1 Year of Age		At All Ages						
				Number	Rate per 1000 Births registered	Number	Rate					
1895	9240	269	29.11	34	126.39	190	20.56	12	No Information	No Information	No Information	
1896	9300	243	25.12	40	164.6	177	19.03	10				
1897	9300	238	25.59	32	134.85	154	16.68	11				
1898	9350	240	25.66	41	170.83	176	18.71	11				
1899	9350	250	26.73	32	128	152	16.25	17				
1900	9350	239	25.66	33	138.07	176	18.82	13				
1901	9182	231	25.15	31	134.1	148	16.11	16				
1902	9200	240	26.08	15	62.5	165	17.93	14				
1903	9200	219	23.8	31	141.55	159	17.28	19				
1904	9242	242	26.18	25	113.3	188	20.34	20				
Averages for years 1895 1904	9271	241	25.90	31	131.42	168	18.17	14				
1905	9292	229	23.13	26	1.3.53	145	15.66	11	3	142	44.15	
Area of District in Acres (exclusive of Area) covered by water).		7586 Acres		Total population at all ages				..	9182	At		
				Number of inhabited houses				..	2063	Census of		
				Average number of persons per house				..	4.46	1901.		

TABLE III. Cases of Infectious Disease Notified during the Year 1905.

Notifiable Disease	Cases Notified in Whole District.						Number of Cases re-moved to Hospital from each Locality
	At all Ages	Under 1	1 to 5	5 to 15	15 to 25	25 to 65	65 & upw's
Diphtheria	3	...	1	1	...	1	...
Erysipelas	7	...	..	...	1	5	1
Scarlet Fever	6	...	1	5	...	...	...
Totals	16	...	2	6	I	6	1
							8

ISOLATION HOSPITAL—Joint Hospital in Urban District.

TABLE. III.
Showing Deaths Registered from All Causes
During the Year 1905.

Causes of Death.	Ages.											Total
	0 to 1	1 to 5	5 to 15	15 to 25	25 to 35	35 to 45	45 to 55	55 to 65	65 to 75	75 to 85	85 & up.	
I. Specific Febrile Diseases	3	8	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	..	...	13
IV. Constitutional Diseases	5	...	1	2	3	3	4	2	5	...	...	25
V. Developmental Diseases	6	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	5	5	16
VI. Local Diseases	11	3	5	3	5	9	9	14	17	7	1	83
VII. Deaths from violence	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1
VIII Deaths from Ill-defined or not Specified Causes		...	1	...	...	1	...	1	..	...	1	4
Totals ...	26	11	8	5	8	13	13	17	23	12	7	142
I. Specific Febrile Diseases												
1. Miasmatic Diseases												
Measles	...	5	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	5
Pertussis	3	3	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	7
Influenza	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	1
IV. Constitutional Diseases												
Cancer	...	...	...	...	...	1	2	1	...	...	...	4
Sarcoma	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	1
Phthisis	...	...	...	1	2	2	2	...	2	...	...	9
Tubercular Meningitis	1	...	...	..	..	...	...	...	...	...	...	1
Tabes Mesenterica	4	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	4
Acute Tuberculosis	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1
Acute Rheumatism	...	..	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1
Chr. Rheumatic Arthritis	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	1
Diabetes Mellitus	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	2	...	...	3
V. Developmental Diseases												
Premature Birth	5	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	5
Malnutrition	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1
Senile Decay	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	5	5	10
VI. Local Diseases												
1. Diseases of Nervous System												
Cerebral Hemorrhage	...	..	...	...	...	...	...	4	6	2	1	13
Delirium Tremens	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	1
Convulsions	2	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3
Spinal Sclerosis	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	1	...	...	2
Paraplegia	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	..	...	...	1
Epilepsy	...	1	...	...	...	1	1	...	...	...	...	3
Sunstroke	...	...	1	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	2
3. Diseases of Circulatory System												
Valvular Heart Disease	...	...	1	2	1	...	...	1	1	1	..	7
Other Heart Diseases	...	...	...	..	...	...	...	4	3	2	...	9
4. Diseases of Respiratory System												
Acute Bronchitis	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	1	...	...	4
Pneumonia	...	...	...	...	1	3	1	1	2	...	...	8
Broncho-Pneumonia	2	1	1	..	...	...	...	...	...	..	...	4
Chronic Bronchitis	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	1	2	...	4
Anthracosis	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	1
5. Diseases of Digestive System												
Postpharyngeal Abscess	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1
Mediastinal Abscess	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1
Gastric Ulcer	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	1
Gastro-Enteritis	3	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3
Acute Intestinal Obstruction	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	1
Appendicitis	...	...	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2
Biliary Calculi	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	1
Hepatic Dropsy	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1
Cirrhosis of Liver	...	...	...	...	...	1	3	1	1	...	...	6
8. Diseases of Urinary System												
Chronic Nephritis	...	...	..	...	...	1	1	...	...	...	...	2
9. Diseases of Reproductive System												
Puerperal Eclampsia	...	...	..	...	1	..	...	...	...	...	..	1
Pyosalpinx	...	...	..	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	1
VII. Deaths from Violence												
Burns	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1
VIII. Deaths from Ill-defined or Not Specified Causes												
Abscess of Neck	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1
Parotid Tumour	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	1
" Probably Heart Failure	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	1
Natural Causes	...	...	..	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	1

Factories, Workshops, Laundries, Workplaces and Homework.

1.—Inspection.

PREMISES.	No. OF INSPECTIONS.
Factories (including Factory Laundries)	30
Workshops (including Workshop Laundries)	88
Workplaces	1
Homeworkers' Premises	2
Total	121

2.—Defects Found.

PARTICULARS.	No. OF DEFECTS FOUND.	REMEDIED.
Want of cleanliness	5	3
Other nuisances... ..	2	2
Sanitary accommodation (unsuitable or defective)	2	0
Total	9	5

3.—Other Matters.

UNDERGROUND BAKEHOUSES. —No new Bakehouses have been Registered during the Year. All cellar Bakehouses have been done away with, and new Bakehouses above ground provided.

HOMEWORK.—Lists received —5. Outworkers —5.

WORKSHOPS ON THE REGISTER AT THE END OF THE YEAR :—Dressmakers & Milliners 25 ; Tailors, 16 ; Bootmakers, 21 ; Joiners, 7 ; Plumbers and Painters, 7 ; Saddlers, 5 ; Laundries, 1 ; Bakehouses, 9 ; Others, 23. Total, 114.

